



# Annual Community Benefit Report

Fiscal Year 2023





A note from

# Arkansas Children's



## Executive Summary

From our early roots as a home for orphaned children to our role today as Arkansas's only pediatric health care system, Arkansas Children's has a long history of supporting the communities we serve. Fiscal year (FY) 2023 continues this legacy with a combined total of \$121,880,764 invested back into communities between our two hospitals. This investment ensures children receive the health care they need, regardless of financial barriers their family faces; paves the way of future health care professionals through education; supports cutting-edge research; addresses social conditions and health issues affecting child health; and aids other non-profit organizations to partner in our mission of making children better today and healthier tomorrow.

Focusing on the child health issues identified in the 2022 Arkansas Children's Community Health Needs Assessments, this year brought to fruition a successful mobile vaccine effort improving vaccine access in some of the state's highest need areas, mobilized efforts to improve pediatric access to mental health resources, launched programming to prepare communities to respond to cardiac emergencies, and more.

Thank you to the many partners who have worked beside us to make the children of Arkansas better today and healthier tomorrow.

**Marisha DiCarlo, PhD, MPH**

**Vice President of Community Engagement, Advocacy and Health**



# About Arkansas Children's

Children are at the center of everything we do.

Arkansas Children's is the only hospital system in the state solely dedicated to caring for children, which allows our organization to uniquely shape the landscape of pediatric care in Arkansas. We are driven by four core values: safety, teamwork, compassion, and excellence. These values inform every decision and every action, from the aggressive pursuit of zero hospital infections to treating each family with dignity, kindness, and concern. These core values fundamentally guide our work at Arkansas Children's.

For more than a century, we have continuously evolved to meet the unique needs of the children of Arkansas and beyond. Today, we are more than just a hospital treating sick kids - our system includes two hospitals, a pediatric research institute, a foundation, clinics, education and outreach, all with an unyielding commitment to making children better today and healthier tomorrow.

## Mission

We champion children by making them better today and healthier tomorrow.

## Vision

Our Promise:  
Unprecedented child health.  
Defined and delivered.



HOSPITALS • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

# What is Community Benefit?

Community benefit is any program or service that responds to a demonstrated health/related community need and seeks to achieve at least one of the following:

- Improve access to health care
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical health or knowledge
- Relieve or reduce the burden of government or other community health efforts

Arkansas Children's has a legacy of supporting community benefit work to ensure that children, youth and their families can plug into healthy communities. In all we do, our focus is working to meet the needs of children and their families to restore children to health, avoid preventable injuries and promote good health practices. Our community benefit strategy involves a multi-faceted approach to use our time, talent, and resources to improve the lives of children and their families.

This report covers audited financial numbers for FY 2023 as reported on Schedule H of the IRS Form 990, addresses health needs identified during the 2022 Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), and addresses activities outlined in the ACH 2023-2025 Implementation Strategy.



In FY23 - Arkansas Children's Hospital invested

## \$96,476,004

in Community Benefit work.

Financial Assistance **62%**

Health Professions Education **16%**

Research **5%**

Community Health Improvement **7%**

Cash & In-Kind Contributions **10%**





# Financial Assistance

## \$60,158,665

to support qualifying families' health care needs.



At Arkansas Children's, we are committed to providing safe, high quality, affordable health care, and we recognize the financial burden that medical bills may cause. During the 2022 CHNA, poverty and finances were identified as an intersecting need, adding

additional challenges and complications to all other child health needs identified. Providing uncompensated care and financial assistance helps to ensure families not only are able to receive the health care their child needs, but also are not burdened with medical bills that hinder their ability to provide for their family.

### By the Numbers

**4,833** financial assistance applications

**6,475** Medicaid applications

Applications for financial assistance are available at all registration areas, can be found on MyChart, on the back of patient bills, and on our website. Arkansas Children's ensures financial counselors are available to assist patient families in our admissions and clinical areas.

“

Parents should be worried about getting their child well and home, not stressing over how they are going to pay.

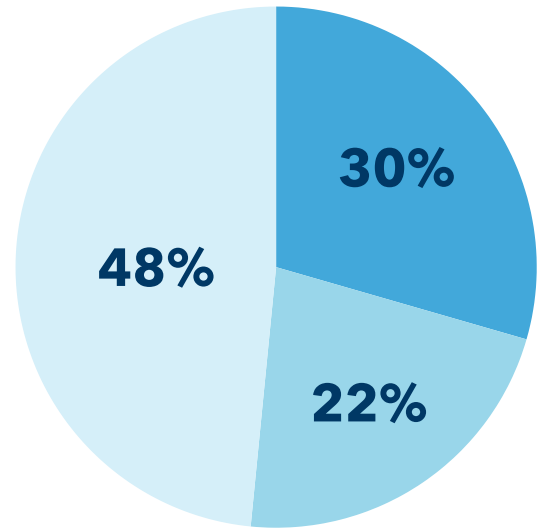
– ACH Financial Counselor

”



## Financial Assistance At-A-Glance

Charity Care at Cost	\$17,728,336
Unreimbursed Medicaid	\$13,287,596
Subsidized Health Services	\$29,142,733
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,158,665</b>



### Making a Difference

"Through being a financial counselor, I have gained a different perspective on Medicaid. I use to think it was only for people experiencing poverty, but the assistance is so much more than that. I love that I get to help so many families get Medicaid or financial assistance, especially when many of them thought they would never qualify for any assistance. When parents, or the actual patients, get excited about getting the help they deserve, it makes my day. I really appreciate the opportunity that Arkansas Children's Hospital has given me to contribute to making a difference in lives."

– ACH Financial Counselor



# Health Professions Education

## \$15,563,273

to support the future health workforce.



By providing educational experiences to health professions around the state, Arkansas Children's helps to build a future workforce of high-quality health care professionals and increase access to care for children in Arkansas.

This work includes activities and programs such as:

- Tuition assistance for health professions
- The Arkansas Children's Simulation Center
- Nursing student clinical rotations
- A medical library

### By the Numbers

**1,379** nursing students received education

**137** individuals received tuition assistance

### Tuition Assistance for a Healthier Tomorrow

"The tuition assistance program allowed me to complete a Master's degree without the burden of taking out student loans. I was able to advance my knowledge and skills in my field, and ultimately advance to a higher level in the organization. I'm thankful this program was available to help me further impact our mission to make children better today and healthier tomorrow."

– Tuition Assistance Recipient





# Research

# \$4,806,781

to support research improving child health.

These dollars supported nurses, physicians, scientists, and other investigators in their research of new innovative tools, techniques, and treatments to cure illnesses, promote wellness, and create new health possibilities for children in Arkansas. Specifically, funds supported the work of ACH Nursing Research and ACH physician's pursuit of research activities.

## Recent Publications in Print

Comparing Novel Virtual Reality and Nursing Standard Care on Burn Wound Care Pain in Adolescents: A Randomized Controlled Trial  
(DOI: [10.1111/jspn.12419](https://doi.org/10.1111/jspn.12419))

The Effect of Contingent Singing on Preterm Infants with Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia.  
Journal of Music Therapy  
(DOI: [10.1093/jmt/thac019](https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/thac019))

## Building New Nurse Confidence

The Nursing Research Department works with new graduate nurses to build confidence in evidence-based practice through a series of interactive lectures and activities during orientations. These activities are designed to build upon knowledge gained in nursing school by applying evidence-based practice concepts in real-world examples. Residents practice writing PICOT questions, searching, critiquing, synthesizing and translating evidence into potential projects that can be implemented at the unit level. In 2023, 3 cohorts attended a variety of classes that examined the evidence on the topics of:

- Improving Caregiver Knowledge of Support Services
- Safe Sleep in the NICU
- Using Whiteboards to Improve Communication
- Will an Established Pathway Improve ED Door to IV Antibiotic Time?



# Community Health Improvement Programs

## \$6,380,870

to support the identified health needs of children and their families.

Arkansas Children's delivered on their promise to communities by continued implementation of health improvement programs designed to meet the demonstrated health needs found in their most recent CHNA. The CHNA identified needs through a process of primary and secondary data collection, analysis, and prioritization, with engagement in robust community listening. From behavioral and mental health to injury prevention, community benefit efforts touched each need with a collaborative partnerships-based approach.



### Some results of these efforts:

**28,739** after-hours resource line calls

**12,230** mobile dental procedures

**2,384** individuals received grief support

**1,885** vaccines at ACH supported SBHCs

**1,515** car seats donated to families in need

**1,533** parcels of groceries distributed

**1,089** safety assessments conducted

**765** car seat inspections completed

**517** individuals received safe sleep education

**228** individuals attended mental health training

**133** Child Passenger Safety Technicians certified

**72** adolescents certified as Safe Sitters

# Expanding Vaccine Access Where Children Live, Learn, and Play

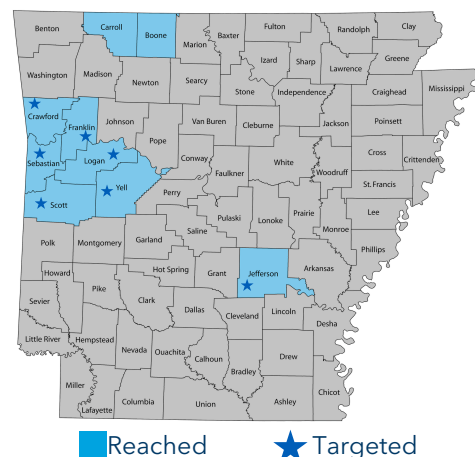
Vaccines protect children when they are most vulnerable and can keep them safe from contracting dangerous, and even deadly, viruses. Despite years of evidence that vaccines are safe and effective, they still often can be hard to access. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program is a federally funded, state administered program that allows children who are on Medicaid, are underinsured, or are uninsured to access vaccines at no cost. In 2022, 12 counties in the state only had access to the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program in the county local health units.<sup>1</sup> Arkansas Children's heard that with limited access, families often had to travel long distances to access the vaccines, or had to choose between paying full price for vaccines at a pharmacy or paying for other basic necessities.

## By the Numbers

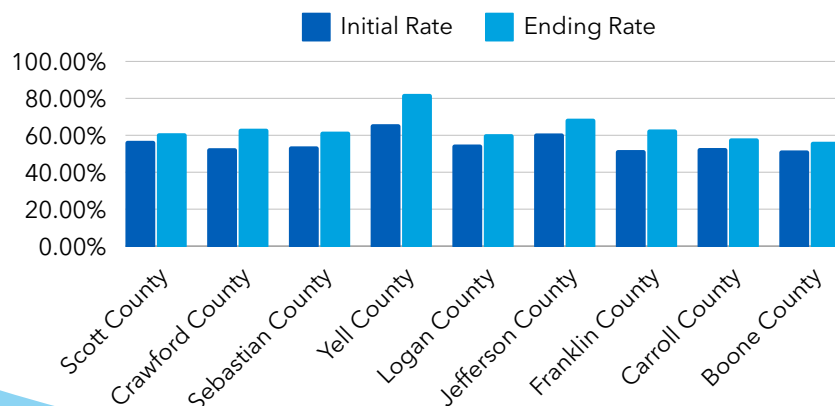
**709** immunizations provided

During FY23, Arkansas Children's worked to create a mobile vaccine strategy to target seven Arkansas counties with low immunization rates and low VFC provider access. These counties included Crawford, Franklin, Sebastian, Logan, Scott, Yell, and Jefferson. Through the work of this mobile vaccine strategy and partnerships, 709 needed immunizations were provided to children in the seven target low access counties, plus additional counties of Carroll and Boone, successfully reaching children where they live, learn and play. This program achieved target immunization rate goals in all seven target counties, improving immunization rates in counties by as much as 25% (Yell County). The learnings from this strategy have informed future work around advancing the VFC program to more sites for broadened access to these lifesaving vaccines.

## FY23 REACH



## FY23 IMMUNIZATION RATE IMPACT



1. Arkansas Children's. (2022). 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (p. 29). Little Rock, AR.



## Preparing Schools for Emergency Cardiac Events

According to a 2023 study, all 75 of Arkansas's counties have an ambulance desert, meaning people there live more than a 25-minute drive from where an ambulance is stationed.<sup>2</sup> When emergencies happen and minutes count, this delay in care can lead to devastatingly negative results, especially when dealing with sudden cardiac events.

In the Spring of 2023, the Arkansas Children's Hospital Heart Institute restarted efforts to provide community level cardiac emergency preparedness training through the national program, Project ADAM. These training efforts equip community organizations, most commonly schools, to respond through the creation of a written plan for sudden cardiac arrest, completion of a program checklist, and conduction of cardiac emergency response drills in collaboration with local emergency response teams. By the end of FY23 in July, the program walked 65 Arkansas schools through this process and designated them as Heart Safe schools.

This designation truly showed its worth when, in June of 2023, a student from Little Rock's Southwest High School collapsed in cardiac arrest at a basketball camp at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Because of the training, the Southwest coaches knew how to jump into action, to find an AED and deliver a lifesaving shock, all the while, overcoming an unfamiliar location and surroundings.

“

“Early CPR started within the first minute, and deploying an AED able to deliver a shock in under three minutes, we know that those are the gold standards for decreasing morbidity and mortality from sudden cardiac arrest. The American Heart Association says for every minute we delay CPR, the patient's chances of survival go down by 10%, so we know that we've got to do this fast. That's the overarching goal – to make teams that can respond quickly and know what to do.” – Project ADAM Program Coordinator

”



2. Jonk, Y., Milkowski, C., Croll, Z., & Pearson, K. (2023). Ambulance Deserts: Geographic Disparities in the Provision of Ambulance Services [Chartbook]. University of Southern Maine, Muskie School, Maine Rural Health Research Center.

# Cash and In-Kind Contributions

## \$9,566,415

to improve the health needs of children and their families.



At Arkansas Children's we understand that we cannot do the work of improving child health alone; therefore, cash and in-kind contributions are made to support other non-profits who share our mission and who help us meet child health needs identified in our triennial community health needs assessments.

During FY23, these contributions benefitted more than 60 organizations addressing a wide variety of child health needs, including the Arkansas Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; Women & Children First; Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance; Apple Seeds, Inc.; Legal Aid of Arkansas; Philander Smith College; and many food banks and pantries across the state.

### Advancing Food Security Through Partnership

"We recognize the importance of initiatives promoting nutrition education and access to fresh, locally sourced produce, especially among low-income students in underserved urban areas. Apple Seeds has been a valued partner in advancing food security goals, and their dedication to empowering young minds aligns seamlessly with our mission."

– Arkansas Children's Leader

More than  
**60**  
organizations  
supported







